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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/MARCHAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2018

TAGS: KWBG PHUM IS PTER

SUBJECT: THREE PALESTINIANS ARE KILLED IN 48 HOURS; PA COMPLAINS ABOUT IDF USE OF FORCE

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. IDF Kfir Brigade soldiers shot and killed three Palestinians in separate incidents near Ramallah from October 14-16. The IDF claimed all three were carrying Molotov cocktails ("firebombs") when killed, according to press accounts. PA leaders criticized the shootings as unjustified, said none of the men killed were carrying out an attack when shot and no attempts were made to arrest the men or use less-than-lethal means to subdue them. End summary.

Three Palestinians Killed in Separate IDF Shootings

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¶2. (SBU) On October 14, IDF troops in positions near Bet El settlement shot a 17-year-old Palestinian from Jalazun Refugee Camp, who died the next day. The IDF told the press that the Palestinian was carrying a firebomb, a potentially lethal weapon, and that the IDF followed approved rules of engagement in killing him.

¶3. (SBU) At a funeral for the youth in Jalazun Camp late October 15, mourners reportedly burned tires and threw stones and firebombs at IDF troops and Border Police in the area. The IDF shot and killed one of the Palestinians. (Note: The IDF told Israeli press that the man was holding a firebomb, a claim denied in Palestinian media by mourners. End note). On October 16, during an IDF incursion in Kufr Malik (north of Ramallah), the IDF fired on a group of three Palestinian men the IDF said were carrying firebombs, killing one (20-year-old Aziz Arar) and injuring another.

¶4. (C) PA Information and Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told press October 16 that the killings were "unjustified" and "in cold blood" and claimed that the killings were related to plans to close off areas around settlements and "proof of an Israeli policy, whether by the Israeli government or its settlers, of ethnic cleansing, planning to remove Palestinians from their homes or lands." PA security commanders said they were prevented by the IDF from entering either the camp or the village (both Area B) to restore order or pay respects to the men's families. They added that no attempt was made to arrest the men if the IDF believed they had been involved in illegal activity, and that the IDF immediately used lethal force in each incident. (Note: Jalazun Refugee Camp and Bet El settlement are separated by a narrow wadi. End note).

Comment

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¶5. (C) While IDF shootings of Palestinians engaged in suspicious activities or carrying firebombs are not uncommon in the West Bank, the fact that three were killed in such a short period has angered Palestinians and caused the PA leadership to accuse the GOI of adopting a more aggressive

policy. Local NGOs and PA officials frequently complain that such incidents are the consequence of liberal rules of engagement that allow IDF soldiers to use lethal force against Palestinians who pose no imminent danger to the IDF or other Israelis.

WALLES